

**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

1. - 2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, wherein the ~~stiffening or hinged member~~ rigid structure is permanently or temporarily attached to the ~~sleeve~~ side portions of the band.

4. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, wherein the ~~stiffening or hinged member~~ rigid structure is attached to the ~~sleeve~~ side portions of the band using a male-female mechanical connector.

5. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, wherein the ~~stiffening or hinged member~~ rigid structure is attached to the ~~sleeve~~ side portions of the band using a hook-and-loop fastener.

6. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, further including an intermediate layer disposed between the ~~sleeve~~ inner surface of the band and the skin of a wearer.

7. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, further including an intermediate, perforated layer disposed between the ~~sleeve~~ inner surface of the band and the skin of a wearer.

8. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, further including a cushioning or thermal-insulating layer inside the ~~sleeve~~ band.

9. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, further including a cushioning or thermal-insulating outside the ~~sleeve~~ band.

10. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The implement of claim 21, wherein:

~~the evacuable sleeve encircles a portion of the body above a wearer's foot; and~~  
~~the sport-related device is~~ rigid structure includes a shoe, boot, or fin.

20. (Canceled)

21. (New) A body-worn implement, comprising:

a flexible band adapted to encircle a calf portion of a human leg extending entirely through the band, the leg terminating in an end portion not covered by the band;

the band having an inner surface spaced apart from the skin of a wearer and an outer surface with opposing side portions and a port facilitating evacuation of the space so that the inner surface of the band makes intimate, slip-free contact with the skin; and

a rigid structure coupled to the side portions of the band, the rigid structure including a portion that extends around and past the end portion of the leg, thereby transferring loads to the band and calf portion as opposed to the end portion of the leg during ambulation.

22. (New) The implement of claim 21, wherein the rigid structure includes a cast.